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Tuesday, August 17, 2004

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Press Release

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PR03:070
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
03/07/2003

GOVERNOR DAVIS PROCLAIMS STATE OF EMERGENCY DUE TO BARK BEETLE 3/7/2003

*Action Allows State, Landowners to Take Steps to Prevent a Catastrophic
Fire in Areas with Dead and Dying Trees Within Riverside, San
Bernardino, and San Diego Counties*

RIVERSIDE

Governor Gray Davis today proclaimed a State of Emergency in Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties where hundreds of thousands of trees are dead and dying after being weakened by drought and attacked by an infestation of bark beetles.

"Trees on more than 150,000 acres have died and an estimated 75,000 residents are threatened by catastrophic wildfire, injury, and property damage from falling trees," Gov. Davis said. "My action cuts the red tape and provides landowners with the regulatory relief necessary to quickly remove dead and dying trees from their property."

"Further, I've directed the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), to take immediate steps to protect public safety by clearing effective routes for evacuation and emergency response and by establishing fire safe evacuation centers," the Governor continued.

The proclamation suspends both the requirements for the prior notification for emergency timber removal, and the limitation on the amount of dead, dying or diseased trees that can be removed. The Governor's action also allows licensed tree removal contractors, as well as licensed timber operators, to be hired by landowners to remove affected trees. Collectively, these actions will provide a larger pool of contractors for



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landowners to hire from and expedite removal of flammable vegetation.

The Governor also tasked the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to support CDF in its efforts as well as to work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to redirect \$3.3 million in unused federal hazard mitigation dollars to the region.

The federal government recently approved the funding and OES and CDF will now work with local agencies to develop a program to administer the funds as quickly as possible to support the overall effort to reduce the fire threat in the region.

CDF is continuing to remove infested trees in the three-county area and has been providing forest stewardship assistance to local communities while enhancing its emergency response capability in the region.

Since September 2002, OES has been working with the affected counties to address the bark beetle crisis. In addition to bringing together CDF and other State agencies to develop a response plan, OES' hazard mitigation staff has continued to work with local agencies on planning efforts for the emergency.

Please link below to view the State of Emergency Proclamation.

[Proclamation](#)

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**GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER · SACRAMENTO,
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Press Release

State of Emergency within Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

STATE OF CALIFORNIA



PROCLAMATION by the Governor of the State of California

WHEREAS, conditions of extreme peril to the people, property and environment exist within the Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego Counties due to imminent fire danger caused by the extraordinary number of dead, dying and diseased trees resulting from prolonged drought, overstocked forests and infestation by bark beetles and other decay organisms; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection declared a Zone of Infestation for bark beetle control within these three counties; and

WHEREAS, the outbreak of the infestation has caused the death of trees and other vegetation on thousands of acres, resulting in conditions of imminent fire danger in these counties and the potential for erosion and other environmental damage; and

WHEREAS, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego Counties have proclaimed local emergencies, committed funds for tree removal and other fire abatement measures, and Riverside and San Bernardino Counties have each created a Mountain Area Safety Task Force to provide a coordinated multi-agency response to dead, dying and diseased trees and vegetation; and

WHEREAS, by reason of their magnitude these conditions are beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of the three counties, thereby requiring a proclamation of a state of emergency; and

WHEREAS, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego Counties have requested a state Proclamation of Emergency in order to expedite removal of dead, dying and diseased trees and vegetation, and to assist in providing evacuation routes and fire safe evacuation centers; and

WHEREAS, unless the risks posed by dead, dying and diseased trees and other vegetation are immediately reduced, there will be an increasingly great risk to life and property from catastrophic fire in an area with limited routes for the evacuation of people and emergency response; and

WHEREAS, the number of contractors available to perform tree removal work for private landowners is insufficient to accomplish the work within the time necessary, and

WHEREAS, under the authority of the Emergency Services Act, section 8558(b) of the Government Code, I find that a State of Emergency exists within Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GRAY DAVIS, Governor of the State of California, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the Emergency Services Act, and in particular, sections 8625 and 8558(b) of the Government Code, HEREBY PROCLAIM A STATE OF EMERGENCY to exist within Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties.

Pursuant to this Proclamation, I issue these orders to be effective immediately:

IT IS ORDERED that the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection ("CDF"), in consultation with California Department of Transportation, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Fish and Game, the South Coast Air Quality

Management District, the Lahontan, Santa Ana and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Boards and other state and local agencies as appropriate, shall immediately:

- * Assist local jurisdictions in the three counties to prepare public safety plans that provide adequate evacuation routes and fire safe evacuation centers;
- * In cooperation with other appropriate state and local entities, expedite the clearing of dead, dying and diseased trees and other vegetation that interfere with emergency response and evacuation needs;
- * Reinforce firefighting resources available in the three counties, including assuring that aircraft and fire crews will be immediately available in the event of a fire; and
- * Redirect existing resources to assist landowners by giving forest stewardship advice and oversight of tree removal.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all state agencies and departments shall provide personnel, equipment and facilities to assist CDF, as directed by the Office of Emergency Services in consultation with the Department of Finance.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that to implement this Proclamation, CDF may enter into contracts and arrangements for the procurement of materials, goods, and services. Pursuant to Government Code section 8571, the provisions of the Government Code and the Public Contract Code applicable to state contracts, including, but not limited to, advertising and competitive bidding requirements, are hereby suspended to the extent they would prevent, hinder, or delay the clearing of public evacuation corridors, fire evacuation centers, and routes for emergency response as necessary to mitigate the effects of this emergency.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that CDF, in consultation with all appropriate state and local agencies, shall immediately work to improve public evacuation corridors, fire evacuation centers and routes for emergency response. Pursuant to Government Code section 8567, CDF is hereby authorized to enter onto private property as it deems necessary to remove and dispose of dead, dying and diseased trees and vegetation that threaten public evacuation corridors, fire evacuation centers, and routes for emergency response.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, to assist and encourage landowners to meet their responsibilities for removing dead, dying and diseased trees and clearing fuel breaks on their lands, pursuant to Government Code section 8571, the requirement for submitting notices to CDF under the provisions of Title 14, California Code of Regulations, sections 1038(b) and (c), prior to beginning timber operations for the removal of dead, dying and diseased trees or the cutting or removal of trees to create fuel breaks and the limitation on the removal of dead, dying, or diseased trees to ten percent of the average volume per acre are hereby suspended. All other provisions of these regulations shall remain in effect.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that to expand the number of contractors available to perform services to property owners for cutting and removing trees for fire safety purposes by authorizing use of tree service contractors licensed to perform tree removal work under Business and Professions Code sections 7000 et seq., in addition to timber operators licensed under the Public Resources Code to perform timber operations, pursuant to Government Code section 8571, the provisions of Public Resources Code section 4571(a) providing that only licensed timber operators may perform timber operations are hereby suspended. A licensed timber operator need not obtain a contractor's license under the Business and Professions Code in order to carry out work under this Proclamation.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Office of Emergency Services work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to redirect excess federal hazard mitigation funds for the purpose of reducing the fire and other hazards caused by the dead, dying and diseased trees and vegetation.

IT IS REQUESTED that the Public Utilities Commission direct utility companies with transmission lines in Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego Counties to ensure that all dead, dying and diseased trees and vegetation are completely cleared from their utility right-of-ways to mitigate the potential fire danger.

This Proclamation and these Orders are not intended to, and do not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable in law or equity, against the State of California, its departments, agencies or other entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that as soon as hereafter possible, this proclamation be filed in the Office of Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given to this proclamation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this the seventh day of March 2003.



/s/ Gray Davis

Governor of California

* * *

Proclamations are posted as soon as possible but may not always be available on the day they are issued.

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